

# THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

THE INDUSTRIAL AND EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF OUR PEOPLE PARAMOUNT TO ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF STATE POLICY.

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## AGRICULTURE

### Organizing the Tobacco Farmers.

Editor of The Progressive Farmer:

In view of the fact that there is to be a meeting of the Tobacco Growers' Association in Rocky Mount on the 21st inst., I wish to say a word in behalf of organization.

I have attended most or some of the meetings of the Association from its organization. At all of these meetings I have tried hard to get the leaders and every one else first to organize, then go to work. This is absolutely true; without perfect organization the movement is a failure; with organization it is a success. I believe every one recognizes this truth; still but little has been done to organize our forces. Shall we organize? The fight is ours when we organize, but never until then.

If we were organized to-day the American Tobacco trust could be broken in thirty days. This was done in the case of the jute trusts. The news came along down the lines from headquarters, and at the next meeting of the Sub Alliances all over the South resolutions were passed saying that we would not use another yard of jute bagging, and at the same time we were told what to do and what to use.

With the same conditions we can control matters now. We are in better condition for organizing now than then. Then we were alone and did our own fighting. Now we have every business interest to help, and our interest is every other man's interest. Now it is a common cause, and every man, woman and child is interested.

At the meeting in Rocky Mount last winter, and in The Progressive Farmer before the meeting, I advocated a plan which I am sure will succeed in a very short time. The Association is partially organized on this plan now. My plan is to have a business organization strictly; one president, about fifteen directors and an organizing agent permanently located in each county. These county agents to report to the president and he to the directors. These agents are to be the very best men to be had, and they are to have a permanent job and a good salary. These agents are to report everything about the tobacco crop and to meet with the sub or township organizations and instruct them in all matters pertaining to the order. I speak advisedly when I say that the agent must stay with his

work in each county at all times. He must be a very active, pushing business man.

To organize the people and then leave them alone is of no lasting good. We all know this by experience. The farmers insurance association went down as soon as the agents left.

There is much more of detail I could give here, but will stop and expect others to discuss it further before the meeting on the 21st inst.

There is also a movement on foot to have a big meeting in Wilson on the 22nd inst., and we hope to have the speakers from Rocky Mount to speak at this meeting in Wilson.

H. F. FREEMAN, M. D.

Wilson Co., N. C.

### Last Week's North Carolina Crop Bulletin

Over large areas old as well as late corn was much benefited by timely rains and are earing well; in some sections early corn continued to suffer for lack of rain and upland crops fired and even tassels are dead, but late corn is still fine everywhere; some correspondents report that corn is better than for years, and in some counties stalks bearing two or more ears are common. Fodder is ripening, and gathering it is now underway. Cotton continues to improve; many report that it now has plenty of weed, but in dry sections the plants have remained small, with blooms near the top; late corn is loaded with squares and blooming freely; the amount of shedding is not excessive, and reports are numerous to the effect that cotton is fruiting well. Tobacco needs rain to mature the top crop; in the dry counties it is small and narrow and does not cure very satisfactorily; curing is nearing completion in southern and eastern counties, but is not yet fully underway in the largest producing section in the northern portion of the State. Rice, peanuts, peas and potatoes continue to do well. Some turnips have been sown. Grapes are ripening with prospects for an average crop; apples and peaches are good in some sections and quite poor in others, generally only a fair crop; melons are late, but are improving in quality. A general rain is needed to enable farmers to begin their fall plowing.

Do not dare to live without some clear intention toward which your living shall be bent.—Phillips Brooks.

## TOBACCO BELOW COST OF PRODUCTION.

### The Combination of the American and Imperial Companies Responsible—Tobacco Farmers and Independent Manufacturers Should Fight the Trust.

Secretary of State J. Bryan Grimes, a large tobacco grower, and formerly President of the North Carolina Tobacco Farmers' Association, gives out the following interview:

"Reports from the various markets of the State show that tobacco is below the cost of production. These prices will prove ruinous to the farmer and speculator, and blight the tobacco towns. This was to be anticipated if an average crop was raised in 1903, and we urged a reduction of acreage. The competition between the American and Imperial Tobacco Companies last fall caused tobacco to command good prices, and gave the farmers a highly prosperous year and much encouragement. The combination of these concerns destroyed competition, and toward the close of the season prices went down very low, causing loss and ruin to the speculators and independent buyers. Many of these buyers still have tobacco on hand, which, in the face of the low prices fixed by the trusts, means bankruptcy to them and will free the trusts from their competition in the future.

"From present indications, it seems that the trust will more than recoup itself from the good prices paid last fall, and annihilate those who had the temerity to antagonize it. Is there any hope? I think so. The hope of the farmer and tobacco men in North Carolina is an immediate organized fight for better prices, curtailment of acreage, and the establishment of independent plants. If the tobacco towns, farmers, independent manufacturers and people will make common cause against a common enemy, there is hope for us. Small cigarette, smoking and plug tobacco factories, by co-operative capital, should be built in every tobacco town. It would not take large capital to do this, and the anti-trust sentiment in this State would secure purchasers for the anti-trust goods. This has been proved by the flattering success of the Wells-Whitehead Company. While tobacco is below cost of production is the time for the independent concerns to buy their stock, and if bought for less than it is actually worth, it cer-

tainly is a safe investment, and can be manufactured profitably. Wherever small factories are established, they should watch the market and lay in their supply when the price is low.

"That the trusts are not all-powerful if they are resisted, is illustrated by the failure of the Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company to control the cotton seed business, as small co-operative cotton seed oil mills have been built and successfully managed to take the place of those sold out to the trust. We will make an effort to get a list of the independent factories and the names of the merchants' Associations of the various towns and see if we cannot secure co-operation and stimulate the output of these factories, and bring producer, merchant and consumer nearer together. If this is done successfully here, it would be followed by the other States of the Union, and prove far-reaching in its success. This is one of the immediate purposes of the Association and of the Farmers' Alliance. The Secretary and Business Agent of the Farmers' Alliance, Mr. T. B. Parker, of Raleigh, and the Secretary of the Farmers' Protective Association, Mr. W. P. Batchelor, of Raleigh, wish to secure the addresses of all the independent tobacco factories in North Carolina, all the merchants' associations and all other organizations which will enter into this fight for better prices for tobacco.

"What of the progress of the Farmers' Alliance and Farmers' Protective Association? The Alliance is taking on new life. It will profit by its past experience and will avoid all political pitfalls. It is now girding itself for this fight for the people's rights with the same determination that brought victory in breaking the jute-bagging trust. The Farmers' Protective Association has encountered some difficulties, but I believe within a year will become a vigorous and powerful organization. The farmer has seemed unwilling to help himself. They seem to lack confidence in each other, and have been unwilling to spend time or money for self-protection. It is impossible for us to get accurate statistics just now. The farmers are in the dark to a large extent, but it seems that prices are lowered for no apparent reason except the arbitrary will of the trust, and we propose to fight it. I think the present prices will force the farmers in desperation to combine for self-preservation."